Incentives to farmers

*332. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any specific incentives have been given to the farmers of wheat producing areas this year so as to ensure increased production of wheat in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the likely expenditure incurred/to be incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A Centrally Sponsored National Food Security Mission—Wheat (NFSM-Wheat) has been launched for implementation from Rabi, 2007-08 in 138 identified districts of nine states namely Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal with an aim to increase production of wheat by 8 million tones by the end of Eleventh Plan (2011-12) in the country.

Under this Mission incentives are provided for demonstrations of improved package of practices; seed replacement; micronutrients; gypsum; zero till seed drills; rotavators; pilot project on community generators for irrigation in shallow water table areas; diesel pumpsets; farmers trainings; award for best performing districts, new initiatives etc.

During the current rabi season (2007-08) an amount of Rs. 163.393 crore has been approved, out of which an amount of Rs. 89.20 crores has been released. Besides, 5,10,480 number of wheat minikits of latest varieties (5 kg each) with a cost of Rs. 5.10 crore have also been allocated.

In addition to this, Integrated Cereals Development Programme—Wheat (ICDP-Wheat) has been under implementation on 90:10 sharing basis between GOI and implementing states in non-NFSM districts through Macro Management Mode of Agriculture. Under this Scheme incentives are provided for distribution of seeds, propagation of improved production technologies, integrated pests management, training of farmers, farm implements, sprinkler sets, etc. Besides, Frontline demonstrations are also organized by the ICAR on farmers' fields on 100 per cent GOI assistance.

Survey for gauge conversion

†*333. SHRI KRISHAN LAL BALMIKI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of proposals for rail-tracks on which survey work for gauge conversion has been included in the Rail Budget for the year 2007-08;

(b) the time limit fixed for completion of the survey work of the above gauge conversion; and

(c) the criteria fixed and approval of guage conversion work on completion of survey work?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) and (b) In the Rail Budget 2007-08, three surveys for gauge conversion were included. All these surveys are likely to be completed in about a year's time.

(c) Project Uni-gauge was taken up on 01.04.1992 and the criteria adopted for taking up gauge conversion is as follow:—

(i) To take up conversion of lines to develop alternative broad gauge (BG) routes obviating the need for doubling existing BG lines on these routes.

(ii) To establish new BG links between stations connected by other BG lines.

(iii) To establish BG connection to ports, industrial centres and locations having potential for growth.

(iv) To take up conversion of lines required on strategic considerations.

(v) To minimize transshipment and to improve wagon turn around by avoiding delays at transshipment points.

(vi) To carry out the conversion of lines as per the above policy at-least cost yet providing a standard of service not lower than what the rail users were getting on the MG.

Some of the gauge conversion projects have also been taken up on socio-economic considerations for development of backward, hilly, remote and under developed areas.

Synthetic milk production in Uttar Pradesh

*334. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that a large quantity of synthetic milk and its products are being prepared by unscrupulous manufacturers by mixing detergents, urea and shampoo in and around Bulandshahar, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Meerut:

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of persons booked under the law and convicted for the adulteration of these products; and

(d) the action taken by Government to contain this illegal trade which played havoc with the life of the consumers?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (d) As per the information provided by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, the manufacture and sale of adulterated milk containing Carbonate, Urea, Foreign Fat, Glucose etc. in the districts of Meerut, Bulandshahar and Muzaffarnagar has come to the notice of the Government. The Government of UP has carried out a special drive to check adulteration in milk and milk products during the period of 1.1.2007 to 31.10.2007. Out of 734 milk related samples lifted, 661 samples were examined in the Public Analyst Labs and